

SCRIPTURE

THE QUARTERLY OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL ASSOCIATION

VOL. IV. NO. 11

JULY 1951

EDITORIAL

Rules of the Association. A draft of the proposed rules was issued with the April number of *SCRIPTURE*. This draft was the result of discussion at the last General Meeting of the Association, held at the Newman Centre in London in December 1950, and each rule will be voted on at the next General Meeting meeting. Any alterations or additions should be sent to the secretary as soon as possible, for consideration by the Committee. Those who have not had a copy of the proposed rules may obtain one from the Secretary.

Biblical Lectures at the Newman Centre. This Association, in conjunction with the Newman Association, has arranged a further series of lectures, starting next October at 31 Portman Square, London W.1. The subject is the New Testament and the course comprises twenty-four lectures. The Gospels (fourteen lectures) will be treated by Dr Fuller and this will be followed by ten lectures on the Pauline epistles by Dr Leahy. The course aims at giving an introduction to the Gospels and Pauline epistles with some account of current literary criticism of the subject. This will lead to a treatment of the teaching of Jesus and St Paul, considered in relation to the historical setting.

This is the third year of a cycle of Scripture lectures, of which the first two treated of the Background of Bible Study and the Old Testament respectively. It is not, however, necessary to have attended the previous courses in order to follow the New Testament lectures.

The lectures will be given on Fridays at 6.30 p.m. as previously, and they will start on 5th October 1951. Each lecture will be followed by a discussion. Members of the C.B.A. will be admitted at the same fee as Newman members, i.e. £1 for the course, instead of the ordinary fee of £1 10s. od. Anyone who is a full-time student will be admitted for 10s. There is a canteen on the premises, which anyone attending the lectures may use, whether or not they are members of the Newman Association. Application to follow the lectures should be made to the Hon. Secretary, Adult Education Committee, Newman Centre, 31 Portman Square, London, W.1.

It should be stated that the lectures are intended for the ordinary educated Catholic and are not for the specialist. We hope that as many as possible will attend, as this will help us greatly in the planning of future courses.

A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture. At long last we are able to announce that the work of preparing the Commentary is now finished and the publishers, Thomas Nelson and Sons, intend bringing it out early next year. It is now over seven years since the work was begun, and considering the size of the undertaking we have no reason to complain at the length of time taken. One might on the contrary feel some surprise that it has in fact been completed so soon, in view of all the unforeseen difficulties encountered. Certainly the committee have done all in their power to ensure that the Commentary shall be a worthy product of the English-speaking Catholic world and the publishers too are sparing no pains to make it everything that such a volume should be. An interesting prospectus has been produced by them giving a description of the work together with a list of contributors and the articles. Several specimen pages are included in the prospectus. Orders are being accepted and application should be made to Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd, 3 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.2.

Recent Catholic Truth Society Pamphlets. We have received a number of recent issues. The Papal Encyclical *Menti Nostrae* has been translated into English by Dr Cartmell under the title *The Priestly Life*. The Letter reads well in the translation and has been very conveniently divided into sections with headings. The Torch Series will be already well known to most readers. A selection before us contains such titles as 'One Church', 'Catholic England', 'The Mass', 'Death', 'The Redeemer', 'Why Marry?' The series is designed to reach a wider public than the usual C.T.S. pamphlets and is written in a more popular style. These samples of the series augur well for the success of the enterprise.

THE BIBLICAL JUBILEE AND SOCIAL REFORM¹

THE twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus contains one of the most fascinating inventions in the history of our race, the Jubilee. Of the jubilee as a chronological device, we will say only that it was a development of the sabbath. Like the seventh day, each seventh year was sacred and festive, and the seventh such year, called in round numbers fiftieth,² enjoyed the most sacred mystic symbolism of all.

It is rather the *sociology* of this institution which you have asked me to speak to you about to-day. And quite honestly, this page of an ancient scroll is a veritable textbook of sociology. You will see that it treats in a very practical way the problems of ownership and debt, racial minorities, marriage and inheritance, war and crime, caste and class struggle, poor-relief, agronomy, hired labour. It treats these all as aspects of what has become one of the liveliest issues of our day, the problem of *latifundism*, or the *just* redistribution of *excessive* property holdings among the *unduly* indigent. This problem in the biblical terminology resolves itself into three phases: labour, property, and bankruptcy.

Out of respect for His Majesty's government, let us begin with labour. You all know that the jubilee was prescribed as a release of slaves. But prior to whether and how the slaves were to be released, is the question of whether there *was* slavery in Israel. The word '*ebed*, 'worker', is used in a variety of senses verging on the metaphorical, and in most cases implies no more than one who renders some service to another. The only biblical passages which present the '*ebed* in the technical sense of involuntary servitude are those which speak of terminating this relationship; and they are precisely the ones which relate to the jubilee law. Lev. xxv, 39-55 must be regarded not merely as a law limiting slavery but *per prius* as a law sanctioning and even recommending slavery.

Scandalized Jewish exegetes have reacted by insisting that the word '*ebed* does not mean slave at all, but free labourer; the Talmud itself is of divided opinion.³ Lev. xxv, 39 forbids treating the Israelite as a slave; but in the same breath it speaks of selling him and making

¹ Address delivered to the Conference of Ecclesiastical Studies at Hull, March 29th, 1951.

² So a minority of the more scientific recent scholars, as Anton Jirku, 'Das Israelitische Jubeljahr', in *Reinhold-Seeberg-Festschrift* (Leipzig 1929) 2, 170; though he neglects the internal development linking sabbath-year and jubilee, see August Klostermann, 'Kalendarische Bedeutung des Jubeljahres', *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 53 (1880) 726.

³ Tony André, *L'Esclavage chez les anciens Hébreux* (Paris 1892) 43: *Qiddushin* 16a, 28a, *Baba Kamma* 113b, real slavery; *Erachin* 28a, merely labour.

him serve, and distinguishes him from the *sakir*, technical term for a hired man. It makes clear that the *unmitigated* slavery of Israelites is forbidden, but the whole question turns upon what is meant by *unmitigated*.

First of all, you must not project into the ancient Orient our democratic view that there is a stigma in being the property or chattel of another. If the slave owed absolute obedience to the master, and was his property, in this he was no different from the master's wife and children. Family and slaves were treated with equal kindness or harshness; in fact, the owner had the power of life and death over his children, but not over slaves.¹ In Biblical times and in recent Arab practice, slaves have been freed after seven or ten years and married to the owner's daughter.²

Secondly, we must interpret the so-called slavery in its relation to racial minorities. The word *ger*, usually translated 'alien', actually means a non-Israelite permanently living in Israel but not altogether incorporated into the theocracy. Lev. xxv, 47 seems to make a radical distinction between the *ger*, who may be enslaved, and the Israelite, who may not. On the other hand, Lev. xxv, 35, 40 explains the milder servitude of the Israelite precisely as a condition parallel to that of the *ger*. Now what was the status of the *ger* or racial minority?

NOMAD CODE OF SANCTUARY

'It is a principle alike in old and new Arabia that the guest is inviolable', writes Robertson Smith. 'Nay, it is enough to touch the tent-ropes, imploring protection. [According to a modern bedouin jurist:] The man whose tent-rope touches yours is your *jar*, and under your protection. *Timb* (tent-rope) is here equivalent to *jiran* [refuge]. If you can quietly approach an Arab and pitch by him thus, you are under his protection. . . . In certain cases in Arabia a man still seeks protection by drawing his own blood and wiping his gory hands on the door-post of the man whose favour he entreats.³ Even though the sly intruder may have been personally odious to the head of the family he thus attaches himself to, every member of the tribe would be shamefully disgraced if they did not thenceforward protect or avenge him even at the cost of their life. Such refugees were frequently admitted by adoption into the tribe of their protector.

It is obvious that only deep *religious convictions* could account for the prevalence of such a Semitic usage, like our medieval 'sanctuary'.

¹ Immanuel Benzinger, *Hebräische Archäologie* (Leipzig 1927) 130 on Exod. xxi, 20.

² I Chron. ii, 34; see Karl Fuchs, *Alttestamentliche Arbeitergesetzgebung* (Heidelberg 1935) 14; Eli Ginzberg, 'Studies in the Economics of the Bible', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 22 (1932) 347, note 7.

³ William Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (London 1907) 48, 61; compare 53.

In a Phoenician inscription, the word *ger* is used for a temple-attendant. 'One may flee for refuge to the god instead of to a human protector, but, just as with the human protector, he must become his servant. Hence there are many Phoenician proper names compounded of *ger*. Hence too the corresponding verb *gur* is used of the Levites' priestly service. Finally by this concept is explained the later manner of expression in the Psalms, of "dwelling" in the tent of Yahweh'.¹ In the Old Testament background, every alien was a refugee who had a specially sacred character in virtue of putting himself under the protection of Yahweh.²

Whereas in a democratic society the loss of liberty is an unmixed evil, in an unpoliced tribal society it was far less than the evil of being free. 'We must project ourselves', says Bertholet, 'into a situation in which the individual as such had as yet no public protection of the law; he found protection only as a member of a clan to which he belonged by nature'. Freedom was lost to the slave, and he could be handled arbitrarily. But in its place, care was taken that he would get along in the temporary union into which he was received. He was not forced to go after his bread, but found it at his hand; and in this security consisted the bright side of his situation as compared with the poor, who from one day to another did not know where their daily bread was coming from.'³

Lev. xxv, 50 therefore says that the impoverished Israelite may be taken as a slave in the same sense that an alien refugee is granted sanctuary by Yahweh: a thoroughly honourable relation involving protection and support by the master and loyal filial helpfulness by the protégé. But then, what of Lev. xxv, 47, which says that the non-Israelite may be made a downright slave in a way that the Israelite may not? Brown calls this one of the few places in which the Old Testament discriminates against aliens.⁴ Are we to say that this exception is so inconsistent with the strictly hospitable Old Testament policy that it must be an interpolation?

Now here is a strange thing. The jubilee law proposes in verses 35 and 39 two maxims safeguarding the impoverished Israelite, so similar in formulation that they look like alternative comments on the same

¹ Alfred Bertholet, *Die Stellung der Israeliten zu den Fremden* (Freiburg 1896) 50, citing Ps. 15H, 1; 61, 5; 5, 5. Compare Otto Procksch, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Gütersloh 1950) 684: 'the *ger* is under the special protection of God; an injury to him is a serious crime'.

² David Daube, *Studies in Biblical Law* (Cambridge 1947) 45 regards as a utopian fiction the concept that God will be redeemer for the poor and friendless; introduced because 'the seventh year and the jubilee seemed to be of little use to those who lacked the backing of a mighty house'.

³ Alfred Bertholet, *Kulturgeschichte Israels* (Göttingen 1919) 119.

⁴ Brown (-Driver-Briggs) *Hebrew Lexicon* (Boston 1928=1906) 158; so Isaac Mendelsohn, *Slavery in the Ancient Near East* (New York, Oxford, 1949) 90.

original phrase. One forbids slavery, but adds a codicil permitting this in the case of non-Israelites. The other forbids *usury*, and does not add a discrimination in the case of foreigners. Oddly though, its parallel passage in Deut. xxiii, 20 does: 'The alien thou shalt bite, but thy brother thou shalt not bite'. *Bite* is generally held to mean excessive usury as distinguished from the milder form *increase*; but if that is meant, how could it be permitted even in the case of foreigners? I think 'the bite' does not really mean interest or usury at all, but savagery, or rather *rigour*, 'the letter of the law' in pressing the payment of legitimate debts from inculpably straitened debtors. Such strict justice is tolerated in the case of strangers, but seems indecent when dealing with one's kith and kin.

As for the discrimination in the case of slavery, I suggest a quite different explanation. Prison-labour is sanctioned even in democracies in the case of either prisoners-of-war or criminals. Salomon has shown that the Hebrew jurists recognized these two legitimate sources of slavery.¹ (Incidentally, according to the Talmud, Exod xxii, 3 means that a thief is to be sold into slavery only when his sale-price is exactly equal to the amount he stole; not if either *more* or *less*; a typically Talmudic decision in which Shylock turns out to be more humane than Portia.) Note then that war-capture is certainly, whereas bankruptcy only doubtfully, a legitimate source of servitude. Now Lev. xxv, 45 distinguishes nicely, but unexpectedly, between aliens within Israel and aliens outside the territory. It was doubtless the practice after a victorious campaign, to bring back by way of indemnity or reparations, some healthy young men to do the onerous public works, and girls to be their wives. Lev. xxv, 44 points out that the offspring of such union may justly be sold in slavery to other families, since the same title of capture in war applies virtually to them. A scruple having arisen, Lev. xxv, 45 goes on to enunciate that the same principle is also valid regarding the indigenous population of Palestine, since they too were conquered in war at the moment of the Occupation.² Both these cases are envisioned in so far as they pertain rather to war than to bankruptcy as a cause of slavery, not in so far as they pertain to racial superiority.

¹ Robert Salomon, *L'esclavage en droit comparé juif et romain* (Paris 1931) 28. On page 10 he compares an interesting etymology of Florentinius: 'Servi ex eo appellati sunt quod imperatores captivos vendere ac per hoc servare nec occidere solent.' So W. B. Greene, 'The Ethics of the Old Testament', *Princeton Theological Review* 27 (1929) 347.

² Compare here the interesting theory of Mayer Sulzberger, *Status of Labor in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia 1923) 16, to whom *gér* means simply 'the indigenous Canaanite reduced to the status of propertyless manual laborer' as in III Kings ix, 26 and II Chron. viii, 7, 8, where Solomon enslaves the Amorites; p. 68 in Syria the workman is called *'amora* (Levy, *Talmud-Wörterbuch*, Berlin 1924). I may add that in the Syriac Lev. xxv, 23ff *'amuru* renders *gér*.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN SLAVERY

We conclude then regarding *labour* in biblical times that it was not a contract-by-the-hour between socially independent parties, but a more domestic arrangement by which the labourer became to a greater or less degree incorporated in the family of the employer. And now a strange paradox. Marriage itself was regarded as a form of hired labour. Two biblical institutions must be kept in mind, whose practice can still be observed among the Arabs of to-day: purchase and polygamy.¹ The purchase of the bride was generally made by the father of the youth. The polygamy sanctioned by the Old Testament was accompanied by a far greater reverence for the sacredness of the marriage-tie than in our quaintly 'monogamous' civilization. The term 'concubine' so frequently encountered is anomalous by our standards, since a man could legally have as many wives as he could pay for. The term designates rather certain *hereditary effects* of his union; the concubine was generally of an inferior social status, and not thought worthy of transmitting the family title.

Consequently there is nothing shocking in the assertion that whenever a man bought a female slave it was with the object of sexual intercourse; but neither is this as crass and promiscuous as it sounds. Numerous examples show that the biblical personages sincerely and devotedly loved a single woman as their true wife: Jacob (Gen. xxxiii, 2), Elkanah (I Sam. i, 5), Job. (ii, 9). But the father of a large family had also the responsibility of finding acceptable partners for his sons and servants. Youthful romance was not unknown, Gen. xxiv, 63; but the choice of bridal qualities by an experienced person without excess of boyish passion was the ordinary thing, Gen. xxiv, 14; Tob. iii, 13. An indulgent father knew that there was no surer way of making his favourite son happy than by providing a worthy abundance of well-favoured maidens from which to choose him a bride.

As a general rule the children of a slave woman (or 'concubine') did not have a right to share in the inheritance. If their father too was a slave, Exod. xxi, 5 had left them indefinitely in servitude and orphaned unless their father chose to remain enslaved for their sakes. Lev. xxv, 41, 54 however declares that they are to be released with him in the fiftieth year. These 'children', be it noted, are getting on to fifty years old by now. Neither they nor their father are exactly at the threshold of youthful vigour, although the grandchildren may be. Are the older folks going to start at this age looking about for the means of an independent livelihood—even with an ox and a wagon load of grain from the owner's barns as Deut. xv, 14 commends? Some more substantial

¹ Immanuel Benzinger, 'Marriage', in *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (London 1902) 3, 2943, 2947; L. Freund, 'Zur Geschichte des Ehegüterrechts bei den Semiten', *Sitzungsberichte Wien*, philosophisch-historisch 162-1 (1909) 20, 38.

stake seems to be required. If this slave-release is not to be ridiculous or downright cruel, it must bear some intrinsic relation to the problem of property. Thus we are brought to the second major phase of the jubilee-release law.

BIBLICAL OWNERSHIP THEORY

The distinctive feature of the jubilee is its property-restitution. This is found *only here*, whereas land-fallow, poor-relief, and emancipation are mentioned elsewhere in the laws. In the jubilee the dominant note is homecoming, and the incidental provisions which deal with property-return problems exceed in bulk other aspects of the jubilee. The ordinance itself is expressed rather obscurely. Only in two verses is it formally reduced to an explicit principle of land-ownership: 'And the land shall not be sold definitively, because Mine is the land; because ye are aliens and settlers with Me; therefore in all the land of your possession ye shall grant ransom for the land (Lev. xxv, 23-24).

It is at once evident that God's ownership of farmland is an expression verging on the metaphorical. Entirely apart from the metaphysical enigma that no reality is verified in God and man in univocally the same sense, there is a special anthropomorphism in representing God as a property-owner and a sort of tribal chieftain. First of all, Yahweh's ownership implies a certain exclusive nationalism. In the Bible, Yahweh is the lord of Canaan by right of conquest¹. Without approving the notion that the tribal god of Israel was merely one among such tribal gods, he nevertheless encourages the chosen people to think of him as *their* God much as the other tribes thought of some spirit or animal as theirs:² Micah iv, 5, 'All nations shall march, each in the name of its god, and we shall march in the name of Yahweh, our God, for ever'. That the gentiles' conviction was stupid and erroneous, whereas Israel's was correct, could be deduced as a corollary from the victory of Yahweh's people over the others.

If in Lev. xxv, 23 Yahweh is referring to the land as his own quite literally and by right of conquest, does it follow that the land belongs to his worshippers, in whose company and in whose persons, as it were, he took victorious possession, and that all those are to be excluded from ownership of the land who do not submit to his (tribally-circumscribed) divinity? This view is to be rejected because it does not fit the context. The exclusive nationalism of Yahweh as Israel's God is just as well verified in a *few* Israelites holding title to all the land. It explains why the land should not be sold to *aliens* (which is not stipulated by Lev, xxv), but not why it should not be sold to Israelites in perpetuity.

¹ Henning Fredriksson, *Jahwe als Krieger* (Lund 1945) 10; Fritz Wilke, 'Sozialismus im hebräischen Altertum', in *Religion und Sozialismus* (Berlin 1921) 19.

² Franz X. Kortleitner, *De diis gentilium* (Innsbruck 1912) 68, 75, 84.

The next guess is socialism. If the land is taken over by 'Yahweh-in-his-people' considered as a sort of single unit, then it is claimed that the land is to be administered as the property of the tribe or community. Kirschner finds a vindication of State socialism. 'The land is God's property, i.e. withdrawn from private ownership to a supra-personal ethical sphere (in modern terms: nationalization, overall ownership by the populace).'¹ Although it is true that certain human institutions are in a special sense repositories of the divine voice in human affairs, *bonum quo communius eo divinius*; nevertheless there is a significant cynicism in the bald assertion that what was old-fashionedly called God's right is in the modern outlook called the State's right. We do not deny that Lev. xxv equates God's ownership with some human institution; but it insists primarily that God's ownership (in modern terms: *ordo rerum in finem supremum*) is *superior* to the claims of any human institution. That is social justice. Of course the State has a serious responsibility for guaranteeing, in so far as its intervention is necessary and proportioned, this social justice, 'free access of all to the land as natural source of prosperity'.²

The Bible is studied diligently in Moscow, by a professor named Lurje, to prove that it advocates Communism; and first of all that Communism is the primitive form of ownership acknowledged in the Bible. This is based on the community as a natural extension of the family. But a study of Village Communities by Maine, while admitting this link of origin, goes on to explain how, in biological wise, development was accompanied by *differentiation*. The lowest political unit in England was 'as elsewhere, formed of men bound together by a tie of kindred, in its first estate natural, in a later stage either of kindred natural or artificial (Freeman) . . . The world, in fact, contains examples of cultivating groups in every stage, from that in which they are actually bodies of kinsmen, to that in which the merest shadow of consanguinity survives and the assemblage of cultivators is held together solely by the land which they till in common. [Such ownership is not "common" as in India, in the sense that all the proceeds are flung together.] In the true Village Community, the village lands are no longer the collective property of the community; the arable lands have been divided between the various households; the pasture lands have been partially divided;

¹ Bruno Kirschner, 'Soziale Gesetzgebung der Juden in der Bibel' *Jüdisches Lexikon* (Berlin 1930) 4-2, 506; compare Franz E. Kübel, *Soziale und wirtschaftliche Gesetzgebung des Alten Testaments* (Wiesbaden 1870) 28.

² Adolf Damaschke, *Geschichte der Nationalökonomie*¹⁴ (Jena 1929) 8.—S. R. Driver, *Deuteronomy* (Edinburgh 1902) 177 (following Wellhausen *Prolegomena*,^o Berlin 1905, p. 113) speaks of the sabbath-year fallow as a 'relic of communistic agriculture', but understanding the term of any 'institution limiting the rights of individual ownership in the interests of the community at large'.

only the waste remains in common.¹ Common origin is seen here to be quite a different thing from common ownership. Towns there are aplenty in the Old Testament, and families as well, but the two terms are apparently as distinct in connotation as in our own civilization.

But what renders Lev xxv, 23 instantly untenable as a Communist manifesto is that the land is precisely said to be inalienable private property. As Salomon puts it, 'Just as the Communist demand is succinctly formulated "None shall have property", so the biblical formulation is "Everyone shall have property". Every man is to be his own master, free and joyfully working at his own task: whereas there in the Communist system everyone is the slave of society.'² Moreover, this property is extolled as an incentive to industrious energy: 'for if a man, through indolence or vice, was compelled to sell out his right in the land, he had no security of obtaining it again until the jubilee; that is to say, upon an average, during his working lifetime'.³

Yet Lurje is quite right in his basic (and may we say basically communistic) contention that Yahweh's purpose was to guard against the growth of unhealthy latifunds at the expense of a propertyless proletariat. How this process tended to be verified, he describes with a praiseworthy fidelity to biblical data: 'The small farmer had to get city-products either by exchanging them against his farm-products or by buying them. But the farmer could not support himself from his own crops, and had to borrow grain and money at high interest rates. Thereby rose necessarily debt-bondage. The whole property of the poor farmer, his land and soil, came into the hands of his creditor; and if this did not make ends meet, then he himself (with wife and child) became a bondsman. Not infrequently he was even sold into alien slavery'.⁴ This grim picture, especially in its tracing of property-loss and slavery to debt as a common source, corresponds not only to the forebodings clearly underlying Lev. xxv, but to their fulfilment proclaimed by the prophets, Isaiah v, 8; Micah ii, 2; Amos v, 11; ix, 5.

CLERGY MANŒUVRES SUSPECTED

In Lev. xxvii, 17-24, the jubilee is applied to the obvious advantage of clerical holdings; Lev. xxv itself gives an unexpected and conspicuous prominence to the Levites; and Ezekiel xlviii, 18, one of the few biblical passages which even hint at the jubilee, assigns to the sanctuary a lion's

¹ Henry S. Maine, *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions* (London 1875) 78, 81.

² Kurt Salomon, *Die Lösung des sozialen Problems: die Bibel* (Breslau 1931) 45; Norbert Peters, *Die soziale Fürsorge im Alten Testament* (Paderborn 1936) 34.

³ S. H. Kellogg, *Leviticus* (Expositor's Bible, London 1891) 507.

⁴ M. Lurje, *Studien zur Geschichte der wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Verhältnisse im israelitischen-jüdischen Reiche*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 45 (Giessen 1927) 49.

share in the prophet's model city. Moreover, in Egypt, Babylonia, and Sinai, a mammoth share in the ownership of property became progressively attached to the shrines. Hence another Russian, Nicolskij, wrote a book to prove that the jubilee law was in part an invention of the clergy in the time of Esdras to reduce property-ownership to their exclusive prerogative.¹

It is not in place to discuss here the vast question of the origin of the Levite clergy and their exact relationship to the priesthood, but it may be observed that Deut. xiv, 29 shows them as truly poor and mendicant. It was they who practised for divine worship a form of limited Communism. Their example stimulated the remainder of the population to that God-fearing detachment which alone can conciliate private ownership with the claims of social justice. It is a possibility to be reckoned with, that Lev. xxv, 32 and xxvii, 17 are insertions from a later era in which the Levites had become wealthy, and perhaps thereby lost some of their influence for serving as a common bond to link the leaders and the proletariat.

A theory no less sensational than Nicolskij's is that of Weber, who makes out that property-ownership belongs to the Army, and the jubilee is a form of providing recruits for military service. His basic contention, proved from medieval feudal usage, is that the Army is a form of nobility; only the free-born, property-owning citizen is capable and worthy of caparisoning himself to defend his liege on the field of honour. '*Inheritance* is by no means of agrarian-communistic origin, or even clan-based, but of military origin; wherever the Army was founded on the self-arming of the free landowner, land-possession was a function of national defence.'²

Weber's disciple Menes echoes his master's voice. To him the slave-release was intended as a necessary preliminary to the popular assembly for the revision of the Mosaic law. He sees such an assembly implied in the 'public reading' of the law prescribed by Moses.³ But I ask you if you could imagine five verbs more singularly inept to express the deliberations of a democratic legislative assembly than those used in Deut. xxxi, 12: 'fear, learn, hear, observe, and act.' I am reminded of a joke heard recently on the wireless, which also brought home to me how your generation has succeeded in mollifying anti-Catholic feeling in England. The announcer of a programme from Rugby mentioned

¹ N. M. Nicolskij, *Die Entstehung des Jubeljahres* (Minsk) in Russian; reviewed in *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 50 (1932) 216.

² Max Weber, *Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen* 3. *Das antike Judentum* (Tübingen 1921) 79-80.

³ Abram Menes, *Die vorexilischen Gesetze Israels*, Beihefte zur ZAW 50 (Giessen 1928) 82.—Others stress this sabbath-year review of the Torah as an educational opportunity; so Moses Levene, *Realistic Socialism of the Mosaic Law* (London 1938) 24.

that that celebrated town was formerly known as Rugby near Dunsmore, famed for its connection with Guy Fawkes, 'the only known example of a person who went to Parliament intending to get something done'.

In evaluating the metaphor of property-ownership by God, it is imperative to give due weight to two distinctively biblical institutions regulating property. One of these is the levirate marriage law. The other is ransom; but *ge'ullah* means much more than ransom. It is the obligation of a wealthier kinsman to redeem property in danger of being lost to the family. It is disputed whether he keeps the property himself or leaves it with his poor kinsman; the main thing is that it must remain in the family.¹ The relationship between a family and its property is portrayed in the Bible as a kind of transcendental thing, independent of personal vicissitudes. This is at the basis of Genesis xxiii, 8, where the *tribe* must agree to a sale of land by one of its members before the transaction is considered valid; Musil adds examples of similar modern practice. Ginzberg interestingly mentions the case of modern Arabs to whom the sale of their land was an outright impossibility because the graves of their ancestors were involved²; compare II Samuel xix, 37. This *filial piety* is indeed a strong and sacred link with the soil, even after it is thoroughly purified of animistic superstition. Says Naboth III Kings xxi, 3, 'Before Yahweh, far be it from me to sell or trade the inheritance of my fathers to thee'. The Levirate obligation of Deut. xxv, 5 and probably of Ruth iii, 13 was like the *ge'ullah*, to secure permanence of property within the family.³

We conclude then that the proximate vehicle of divine ownership intended in Leviticus was the family.⁴ The jubilee law was basically an enunciation of 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house'. Family ownership was to be safeguarded by the restoration of all alienated property to its original owners at the end of fifty years. How this principle could have been executed without economic catastrophe must now be explained.

¹ Frants Buhl, 'Some Observations on the Social Institutions of the Israelites', *American Journal of Theology* 1 (1897) 738; *Die sozialen Verhältnisse der Israeliten* (Berlin 1899) 62, 113; Johannes Pedersen, *Israel, its Life and Culture* (London 1920) 1. 84, 88, 392.

² Alois Musil, *Arabia Petraea* (Vienna 1908) 3, 293; Ginzberg, 'Economics of the Bible', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 22 (1932) 370, 373.

³ Millar Burrows, 'The Ancient Oriental Background of Hebrew Levirate Marriage', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 77 (1940) 5, 15; 'Levirate Marriage in Israel', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 59 (1940) 23-33; Paul Koschaker, 'Die Eheformen bei den Indogermanen', *Kongress für Rechtsvergleichung* 2 (Hague 1937) 101-07; Emanuel Ring, *Israels Rechtsleben im Lichte der neu entdeckten assyrischen und hethitischen Gesetzesurkunden* (Stockholm 1926) 48; Thaddeus Engert, *Ehe- und Familienrecht der Hebräer* (Munich 1905) 82.

⁴ Hans Schmidt, *Das Bodenrecht im Verfassungsentwurf des Esra* (Halle 1932) 13.

In every society, the consequence of indolence or unavoidable misfortune is *debt*, with the successive steps of usury, mortgage, and bankruptcy. Of usury I have mentioned that the Old Testament prohibition has been exaggerated by the meaning attached to the term 'bite'. Unless some substitute is provided, the wholesale prohibition of lending at interest could be a cruel restriction, since it practically closes off the access of the unfortunate to the capital needed for putting them on their feet again. The *risk* involved in moneylending, plus the inconvenience of dunning and keeping accounts, is so great that where neither special personal affection nor the profit-motive intervenes, all holders of capital would inculcate Polonius' advice 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be'.

Light on the problem is shed by recent researches proving that Israel's neighbours had quite a different concept of *mortgage* from our own.¹ As you know, 'mort' gage means a dead pledge, because it does not take effect unless and until the loan remains unpaid upon falling due. To the ancient Semites, the loan was made with a *live* pledge, in the double sense that it was apt to be a person rather than a thing, and that it was delivered up for the creditor's use *immediately*, and not upon expiration of the loan. It is at once obvious that we have here a satisfactory equivalent for usury, since a cash value attaches to the services of the pledge, who was either the debtor himself or his son or slave.

This new understanding of the mortgage, or rather live-gage, solves also another thorny problem of Old Testament economics, the *semittâh* or suspension of debts every seventh year. Jewish authorities could never agree whether this meant that the debts were to be forgiven outright, in which case they might just as well have been called a charity-gift from the start; or whether they were merely postponed a year, which amounts to a meaningless formula if there was no interest to be paid in any case. We now see the suspension means the release of the *pledge* during the seventh year.² Thus this prescription turns out to be identical with the seventh-year release of so-called slaves.

But what if the debt was so great that the creditor would not have been sufficiently reimbursed in so short a time? That is precisely where the jubilee law comes in. It begins by indicating that the creditor is not entitled to the harvest in the sabbath year, but it is to belong to the poor, which I interpret to mean primarily the poor serf who now works

¹ H. M. Weil, 'Gage et Cautionnement dans la Bible', *Archives d'Histoire du Droit Oriental* 2 (1938) 1-70 (making the pledge deliverable at some time *after* the moment of loan); Paul Koschaker, '... Eigentums- und Pfandbegriff nach griechischem und orientalischem Rechten', *Abhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 42 (1931) 107-108; compare 39 (1928) 'Neue keilschriftliche Rechtsurkunden aus der El-Amarnazeit'; Max Weber, 'Agrarverhältnisse im Altertum', *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Tubingen 1924) 87.

² Menes, *Vorexilischen Gesetze Israels*, Beihefte ZAW 50 (1928) 81.

as a bondman the property which used to be his own. In this seventh year he is independent; if he continues to work for the same master, he will be earning money on his own account. If it is not enough to pay off his debt, then he must go back to another six-year round of indenture.¹

But in no case is this process to continue beyond the seventh *semitâh*. In that fiftieth year, every servitude is to be definitively terminated. That means, every debt is to be cancelled, every pledge restored; property and personal liberty go together, and in his old age the poor toiler will have the satisfaction of passing on to his now-grown sons a clear title to the family property.² Naturally this economic regulation was to be applied in the seventh and fiftieth year of each particular case. A broad comprehensive view of the whole biblical treatment of the subject shows that it is impossible to regard the jubilee as a universal simultaneous calendar year, at least originally; the very few phrases of the text which seem to postulate this, must be taken as a posterior interpretation.³

From one point of view this purely economic analysis of the jubilee may have seemed to you distressingly materialistic. Yet on second look you will note that the old biblical economics is intensely theological. God's eminent domain is made the foundation of a social justice which safeguards private property and the incentive to thrift, in a framework of the liturgical and charitable sabbath year. No less obvious is the messianic typology.⁴ It is *par excellence* the Christian who, enslaved and impoverished by sin, is liberated with the help of his kinsman-redeemer, inchoatively by grace and definitively in the eternal jubilee. Among the moments of that redemptive process, we may justly allow a very singular place to the Christian jubilee⁵ which in this very year is extended from the Holy Father's throne to the whole Christian world. As an extraordinary release from sin and guilt, the Roman Holy Year

¹ By his success in this seventh year could be judged also the worker's *fitness* for independent life; the legislator was *safeguarding* him from premature release, according to Franz X. Kugler, *Von Moses bis Paulus* (Münster 1922) 51; Knobel-Dillmann, *Leviticus* (Leipzig 1880) 616; Arthur S. Peake, *Brotherhood in the Old Testament* (London 1923) 56.

² Bernardus D. Eerdmans, *Alttestamentliche Studien 4. Das Buch Leviticus* (Giessen 1912) 129.

³ Such an interpretation may well have been influenced by a prevailing septennial reapportionment of farming-plots such as was found in Palestine under the Turkish régime: F. A. Klein, 'Mittheilungen über . . . Gebräuche der Fellachen in Palästina, *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 4 (1881) 70; Samuel Bergheim, 'Land Tenure in Palestine,' *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 22 (1894) 195; John Fenton, 'The Primitive Hebrew Land Tenure' (London) *Theological Review* 14 (1877) 502.

⁴ François-Marie Lemoine, 'Jubilé dans la Bible,' *Vie Spirituelle* 81 (1949) 281, 283, argues solidly but not conclusively that the jubilee "law" was intended not economically but as a symbolic prophecy.

⁵ Peter Schmalzl, *Das Jubeljahr bei den alten Hebräern* (Eichstätt 1889) 92f.

has been a force to raise men's hearts from material absorptions. Thus it has contributed to that detachment and Christian brotherhood which beyond any sociology or socialism must be counted upon to redistribute the goods of the land in accord with social justice.

St Louis University, U.S.A.

Robert North, S.J.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY AND MESSIAS PROPHECIES

THE average student of Theology is unconsciously led to identify prophecy with prediction and to associate the O.T. prophecies with the Messias. The prophets of the O.T. are regarded as the announcers of the Messias, and their prophecies as the predictions of the Messias, his person, his mission and his times. This is, to some extent, due to the theological studies of our younger years when we are taught that prophecy is the prediction of future events and that the O.T. prophecies fulfilled in N.T. times are a strong argument for the Christological doctrine of the N.T.

This, however, is only a part of the truth and can give rise to a misconception of the nature of O.T. prophecy and its Messianic import. The exact definition or description of the function of a prophet is given in Exodus vii, 1 supplemented by Exodus iv, 15f. In Exodus vii, 1 God said to Moses: 'Behold I have appointed thee the God of Pharaoh: and Aaron, thy brother, shall be thy prophet'. In what manner Aaron was to be Moses' prophet is explained in Exodus iv, 15f, where God says to Moses: 'Speak to him (Aaron) and put my words in his mouth: and I will be in thy mouth and in his mouth, and will shew you what you must do. He shall speak in thy stead to the people, and shall be thy mouth; but thou shalt be to him in those things that pertain to God.' The last words are a paraphrastic rendering of Hebrew, 'thou shalt be to him as God'. From these two passages it appears clearly that the word *nabi* 'prophet,' whatever its etymology and original meaning, is used in the sense of 'spokesman'. Aaron was to be Moses' spokesman in the same way as Moses was God's. The same definition or description is given in Deut. xviii, 18: 'I will raise them up a prophet . . . and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him'. In all these passages the prophetic function is not restricted to any sphere of time; the prophet has simply to communicate God's message to men whether it refers to the past or to the

present or to the future. Hence, as Father Lattey has remarked, revelation and mission are the essentials of prophecy, but prediction cannot be considered strictly essential to prophecy (*The Religion of the Scriptures*, pp. 47f).

In order to understand better the nature of O.T. prophecy and its relation to prediction let us enquire more closely into the history of prophetism. From its very origin it appears as the impregnable bulwark of monotheism. As the Israelites had no organized and authoritative body of teachers who would keep alive in them their religious beliefs and the precepts of the moral law, God set up an institution that would safeguard the integrity of monotheistic religion and the purity of moral conduct. The prophetic mission, therefore, was not restricted to any particular field of activity, but extended over the religious life of the people in all its various manifestations, in the sanctuary and in the court, in domestic affairs and in political matters, in peacetime and on the battlefield. During the early years of Israel's settlement in the land of Canaan, when the Israelites came into contact with heathen peoples and superstitious practices, the prophet was, to a certain extent and so far as our scanty information of that period goes, the counterpart of the Philistine soothsayer. Man has an inborn tendency to pierce the veil which conceals the future from him, especially in certain critical situations. To satisfy this natural tendency the Philistines had a band of soothsayers, diviners and magicians who pretended to discover the future by means of superstitious arts. The Israelites on entering the land of Canaan would hardly have resisted the temptation to consult the heathen prophets and this would have seriously jeopardized their faith in Yahweh. In order to ward off this danger God gave his people persons who could foretell the future and disclose what was hidden from man, not by magical arts but by the knowledge derived from him. Thus Saul consulted Samuel about his father's lost asses (I Samuel ix, 6ff) and, some years later, consulted God again through the priests and the prophets concerning the issue of the war he was about to undertake (I Samuel xxviii, 6, 15). Gad, the prophet, advised David to depart from Maspha and to return to the land of Juda (I Samuel xxii, 5.) At a later date Jeroboam's wife consulted the prophet Ahias about her sick son (I Kings xiv, 1ff).

This, however, was only one aspect of the prophetic activity during this early period. The prophets were also the bearers of God's messages (Judges vi, 8-10; I Samuel ii, 27-36; xv, 2f); the people's intercessors (I Samuel vii, 5; xii, 23) and God's representatives in all that concerned his theocratic rights over them (I Samuel viii, 6-9; ix, 16; xii, 13-25; xv, 16-30).

During the reign of David, the prophets appear as the king's political advisers and his privy-councillors directing all their efforts

towards consolidating the newly-established monarchy. They are court prophets conveying God's messages to the king and exercising their influence over the government of the State. They do not mix with the people; they have no divine message to give them; they even seem to be indifferent to the people's needs. Nathan delivered to David the message that God would build a house to him (II Samuel vii, 4-17); he rebuked David for his sin with Bethsabee (II Samuel xii, 1-15) and later succeeded in securing the succession to Solomon against the rights of his elder brother Adonias (I Kings i, 11-40). Gad, another of David's prophets, advised the wandering king to return to his own country (I Samuel xxii, 5) and, later, announced to him the punishment which God was about to inflict upon him and his people for his sin in numbering the people and advised him to erect an altar and seek God's forgiveness (II Samuel xxiv, 11-18.) During Solomon's reign we know of one prophet only, Ahias (I Kings xi, 29.) Unlike both Nathan and Gad, Ahias was not a court prophet, but rather a political prophet, who urged Jeroboam to revolt against Solomon. While Nathan and Gad strove for the consolidation of the kingdom, Ahias was instrumental in bringing about its disruption. But it must be remembered that the division of the kingdom had already been decreed by God as a punishment for Solomon's aberrations; and Ahias, whatever his personal leanings may have been, was simply predicting what had already been determined by God. This explains why the prophet Semeias deterred Roboam from any attempt to bring back the dismembered tribes (I Kings xii, 22-24).

The disruption of the kingdom, the pernicious example set by Solomon with his foreign wives and their heathen deities as well as the religious practices of the unconquered Canaanites gradually led to idolatry or, at least, to a syncretistic form of religion which associated Yahweh with Baal, and sacrifices with ritual licentiousness. Moral corruption set in and played havoc among religious and domestic institutions.

It is against this dreary background of religious apostasy and moral degeneration that the activity of the prophets during the period which followed the division of the kingdom must be viewed. True to the religious traditions of their fathers, uncompromising in their attitude towards idolatry, undaunted by the people's opposition or by the king's threats, they taught and warned, they advised and rebuked, they promised and threatened, they laboured strenuously to bring the people back to Yahweh and his law. Indeed the history of prophetism from the ninth century onwards has been aptly summarized in these words: 'Four centuries of conflict with idolatry' (Cardinal Meignan, *Quatre siècles de lutte contre l'idolatrie*, Paris, 1903.) The heroic deeds of the prophet Elias, Eliseus' burning zeal for Yahweh, Isaias' scathing

denunciations of Israel's moral corruption and infidelity, Deutero-Isaia's forcible polemizing against the false gods, Jeremias' impassioned outbursts against the obstinacy of the people, their external ritualism and vain confidence in human help in face of imminent danger are too well known to be recounted here. Scattered throughout their discourses there are predictions of impending disaster, especially devastation of the land, deportation of the people and extinction of the wicked, and predictions of peace and welfare for the faithful Israelites.

Thus we see that the essential function of the prophet was the communication of a divine message. But whether that message was the recollection of past events or the denunciation of the present or the prediction of the future depended exclusively on God's will and on his plans concerning the mission of Israel. So also whether they warned or rebuked, consoled or threatened, condemned foreign alliances or encouraged kings to trust in God, announced disaster or foretold restoration, it was God's word which they communicated for the spiritual guidance of the people according to their particular needs. In other words the prophets were *forthtellers*, but not necessarily *foretellers*.

Let us now consider the place which messianic prophecy held in the prophetic mission. From what we have said it appears clearly that the prophets were not invariably and necessarily bearers of bad news, announcers of impending ruin, 'prophets of woe' (*Unheilspropheten*) as they are sometimes called; they were also messengers of good news, announcers of a new era of bliss, 'prophets of weal' (*Heilspropheten*.) This brighter aspect of the prophetic mission is complementary to the more gloomy and dreadful message of destruction forming together what may be called the programme of the prophetic mission when idolatry was at its highest, a programme formulated in God's words to Jeremias: 'to root up and to pull down and to waste and to destroy' and then 'to build and to plant' (i, 10), that is, to announce the removal and destruction of all obstacles and the setting up of a new order based upon righteousness and an unshakeable faith in God. From their written records that have come down to us we can easily reconstruct the whole plan and method of their preaching. They first taught and warned, but as the people remained obstinate and insensible to their warnings, they threatened them with destruction. But as God's promises made to and through the Patriarchs could not be frustrated by man's iniquity, the prophets predicted that out of the general extermination a remnant would be saved and through it Israel would be reborn. The new Israel is then described in messianic colours. Sion will be once more the capital of the new kingdom; an offshoot from David's stock will sit again on David's throne and will reign over all nations. All enemies will be completely exterminated, and the righteous will enjoy everlasting peace. The messianic prophecies are, therefore, a complement and a counterpoise to the prophets' threats, and are generally embedded

in a gloomy context as a flash of lightning on a dark night. Let us illustrate this by examples :

In the group of prophecies ix, 8-xi, 16 Isaias warns the people about the disaster which is to come (ix, 8-x, 4), he then predicts the downfall of Assyria, which, in God's plan, is the instrument of Israel's chastisement (x, 5-19) and the deliverance of a remnant (x, 20-23.) Then, unless the text has been disarranged, the prophet describes the approaching of the invading army of the Assyrians, the devastation of the land of Juda (x, 24-34), the restoration of the land through an offshoot from the stock of Jesse (xi, 1-9) and the glorification of Sion (xi, 10-16). We observe the same scheme in Isaias xxviii-xxxv. Samaria will fall like a faded flower, but it will flourish again and the Lord will be its garland (xxviii, 1-6). The drunkards of Juda will be severely punished, but only to be purified as corn separated from the chaff (xxviii, 7-29). The people will be punished for their rejection of Yahweh's advice and their trust in human help, but a remnant will be saved (xxx, 1-26; xxxi, 1-32; In Jeremias xxiii, 1-8 the promise of the messianic king follows the denunciation of the unworthy rulers of Juda. The restoration promises in xxx-xxxii, though not connected with their immediate context and forming a separate group of prophecies, are logically related to Jeremias' denunciation of Jerusalem's sins and the threat of coming doom. After having atoned for their sins in exile, the people will return to their homeland. Jerusalem will be rebuilt; Yahweh will enter into a new covenant with his people; the Davidic king will no longer be cut off nor the people rejected. Ezechiel severely rebukes the selfish and neglectful rulers of Juda and then promises a Davidic prince that will rule over the people who will enjoy all the blessings of peace and justice (xxxiv, 1-31).

We need not pursue this survey any further. Threats and promises are inseparably bound up together according to a well defined plan in the writings of all the prophets of the monarchy, but neither of them is an essential element of O.T. prophecy. The prophets announced God's word, and God's word was always adapted to the religious needs of the people. In time of religious orthodoxy they endeavoured to keep the people united with the bonds of Yahwistic faith; in time of apostasy they laboured to bring the people back to Yahweh, threatening the backsliders with dreadful calamities and consoling the faithful with the promise of an age of bliss. They were the exponents of true religion, the intermediaries between God and the people and God's representatives in all that concerned his theocratic rights over the people. The prediction of the future, especially the messianic future, occupied a secondary place in the prophetic mission.

P. P. SAYDON.

Royal University, Malta.

BOOK REVIEWS

Le Cantique des Cantiques, with translation and commentary by D. Buzy.
(Letouzey et Ané, Paris, 1950).

Few books of the Bible have had greater variety of interpretation than the Song of Songs, and amongst contemporary writers there is no agreement of approach. Early in the present century Fr P. Joûon, S.J., published a learned commentary in which the book was treated as an allegory of the dealings of God with Israel. Nearly twenty years ago Fr W. Pouget, C.M., and J. Guitton adopted the view that it was a drama, and their commentary has now been translated into English by Fr J. L. Lilly, C.M. At the beginning of the present century the view was common amongst Protestant writers that it consisted of marriage songs used in connection with the seven day oriental marriage festival, and this view was not unrelated to some older Catholic views, save in so far as it treated of the Canticle as a purely secular work.

Father Buzy combines elements of more than one of these views. He finds seven nuptial poems, but firmly repudiates the view that they treat of ordinary human love. He holds that the book is not an allegory but a parable, and that its theme is the relation of God to Israel, and equally the relation of Christ to the Church. Here we find something comparable with the principle of compenetrations, which Fr Lattey has so often applied to prophecy. By a further extension of the same principle, Fr Buzy finds that much can be interpreted appropriately of the Blessed Virgin Mary. His merit as against many other writers is that, because he regards the work as a parable and not as an allegory, he is not compelled to press his interpretation rigidly through all the details of the book, but can recognize that many of the details were dictated by the form of the work. We have therefore nothing like the extravagance of interpretation that has so often marked the commentaries. The Song is held to be the 'Fourth Gospel' of the Old Testament, and is defined as 'a masterpiece of pure poetry'.

The seven poems which are held to have formed the original book are: (1) i, 5-ii, 7, a dialogue between the Bride and the Bridegroom; (2) ii, 8-iii, 5, a monologue by the Bride; (3) iv, 1-v, 1, a monologue by the Bridegroom; (4) v, 2-vi, 3, a second monologue by the Bride; (5) vi, 4-12, a second monologue by the Bridegroom; (6) vii, 1-14, a dialogue between the chorus, the Bride and the Bridegroom; (7) viii, 1-7, the final dialogue between the Bride and the Bridegroom. In all, therefore, there are three dialogues and four monologues. These are held to have been interpolated by nine fragments, which disturb the unity of the book. These nine fragments are: ii, 15; i, 16f; iii, 6; iii, 7f; iii, 9-11; iv, 6; viii, 8-10; viii, 11f; viii, 13f.

It should be added that the commentary had already been published in *La Sainte Bible*, edited by A. Clamer, but here it has been slightly revised and completely rearranged. The Introduction is somewhat extended as compared with the earlier edition, and the complete French translation is given consecutively before the commentary. Both the Latin and the French translations are given at the beginning of each section in the commentary, and the commentary follows, instead of standing beneath the text, as in *La Sainte Bible*.

H. H. ROWLEY.

The Holy Bible: the Book of Genesis translated by members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America (Paterson, New Jersey: St Anthony Guild Press, 1948) Pp. vi + 130. One dollar.

This version of Genesis is the first instalment of a completely new translation of the Bible. Taking the original and oldest texts of the Sacred Books, the translators and editors have set out to use all the critical material available so as to produce a rendering that shall represent, as far as possible, what the inspired authors actually wrote.

In a very brief introduction it is stated not only that the Pentateuch is substantially the work of Moses, but further—and uncompromisingly—that it is a closely knit literary unit. Turning to the notes, the reader will look in vain for any indication of the various sources or traditions that Moses may have used in compiling his great work. Yet some such indications seem to be needed to make sense of repetitive accounts, or to explain apparent inconsistencies, e.g. in the story of the Flood.

The notes are brief and generally informative. Thus on ii, 8 it is usefully remarked that 'the garden was only a part of Eden'. On 'the sons of God and the daughters of men' (vi, 2) the note gives a clear outline of the only tenable explanation. On 'the Lord came down to see the city [of Babel]' the note says that this is a figure of speech meaning that God had inspected the work of building the tower and especially the intentions of the builders. Similar anthropomorphic expressions occurring elsewhere (e.g. iii, 8 and vii, 16) are allowed to pass without comment.

Some notes seem to detract from the authority of the rendering adopted, and may be evidence of divergence between the translator and his board of editors. The text of xi, 1 reads 'the whole earth used the same language and the same speech'; but the note appended says: 'It is certain that all living creatures were not at the tower of Babel. The story cannot mean that this was the only cause of the diversity of languages. Rather, it shows God's supremacy over man and the futility of human attempts to create and maintain unity by material means alone.' Excellently put; but on this basis of a local tradition

the word *ha'aretz* in the original should be rendered 'the land', not 'the earth'.

In i, 2 the phrase *tohu wa-bohu* is translated—conventionally and in our view correctly—as 'waste and void'. It would have been enough to note that waste in this context means without vegetation and void means without inhabitants. But the note speaks of a chaotic mass covered with raging waters, and goes on to develop the idea of universal chaos as though this were present to the mind of the inspired author.

The translation is in modern phraseology. The compromise retaining archaic words, such as thou and thee, even in recent Bible translations has here been abandoned. So has the Hebrew custom of co-ordinating sentences in a narrative with a simple 'and'. Instead, we read short sentences, mostly without any connective or adversative particle, and a curious staccato effect is frequently noticeable.

The presentation of the book, its paper and print, are excellent.

C. B. HUGHES, S.J.

The Gospel Story: Vol. I, Infancy and the Galilean Ministry, by Ronald Cox, C.M., S.T.L., S.S.L. (C.Y.M. Publications, Box 2029, Auckland, N.Z. 1950) Pp. vii + 184. 5s. 3d.

This work is the first volume of a chronological harmony of the Gospel narrative, using the Knox translation as the text, with a commentary by Fr Cox—'ambo Ronaldi, Noxque Coxque sistimus', as the Monsignor puts it in a characteristic dedication. The Gospel text is printed on the left-hand page, the commentary in smaller italic type on the opposite page. With one slight exception, the sequence of events is that of Lagrange-Barton (*A Catholic Harmony of the Gospels*). The Gospel texts are arranged in one continuous narrative. Where there are parallels, that text is chosen which gives the fullest account. Occasionally (as in John iii, 25, 'a Jew' for 'the Jews', John v, 2, the Sinaitic reading Bezatha, for Bethsaida), Fr Cox corrects the text according to the original. Except for John vi, 48–59, the verses are not numbered. The year 8 B.C. is adopted as the year of our Lord's birth, A.D. 28 as the first year of a two-year Ministry. The liturgical days are chosen for the dates of the Nativity, Presentation, Visit of the Magi (6 B.C.), Baptism of our Lord (A.D. 28), and Transfiguration (A.D. 29).

To match the Gospel text with a running commentary that is adequate within the limits imposed by the plan of the work, and at the same time very readable and stimulating, is a feat that calls for no little skill as well as exegetical knowledge. Fr Cox has succeeded admirably in this. His insight into the text is reflected in illuminating flashes of personal comment. He does not hesitate to advance opinions of his

own. Thus, St Joseph moves to Bethlehem with Mary, not merely for the census, but to avoid local gossip on the birth of a child conceived five months before the marriage, and to settle there (p. 16). The *kataluma* of Luke ii, 7, is not the inn, but a guest-room in the house of a relative; the stable is the cavern basement of the same house (pp. 2, 16). Alphaeus (identified with Cleophas), father of St James the Apostle and 'brother of the Lord', is also the father of Matthew the Apostle, who thus becomes a cousin of our Lord (p. 74). He omits John v, 4, and, somewhat too roundly perhaps, rejects it with the remark: 'that it was not part of St John's inspired text'. Hermon is preferred to Tabor as the scene of the Transfiguration. Ain Tineh as the setting of the parables of the Kingdom will be an unfamiliar place-name to most readers.

St Joseph's reluctance to marry Mary is explained as due to reverential fear, an opinion which seems to have little support in the context. To say that the word *almah* contains both the ideas of virginity and motherhood is less carefully nuanced than Mgr Kissanes: 'a word that is so elastic in meaning that it can refer to a virgin and yet not exclude the notion of child-bearing'. And is it quite correct to say (p. 78), that the cure of the man with the withered hand (Mark iii, 5) is 'the only occasion that anger is attributed to our Lord in the whole of the four Gospels?' But as Fr Cox says with disarming modesty, his commentary: 'is only one person's attempt to reconstruct the story; you don't have to accept all that is written there'. In the opinion of this reviewer it will prove a very helpful guide to the study and meditation of the life and teaching of our Lord as set forth in the Gospels. The book is in a very handy format, and the general lay-out is attractive. There are eight full page illustrations, and a table of the chronological harmony. The stiff paper cover will not survive much handling, but this is amply compensated for by the very moderate price of the book.

P. J. MORRIS.

The Gospel Story by Ronald Cox, C.M., S.T.L., S.S.L. Vol. II. 1950. Pp. v + 187-436 + [5] Price not stated.

It is most desirable that the life-story of our Blessed Lord should be presented in different forms and ways in order to cater for the various tastes of different classes of persons. We consequently give a warm welcome to this new book. Recently Fr Roper published the words of Jesus as translated in the Westminster Version linked by the smallest amount of comment deemed necessary. Fr Cox's book differs (see preceding review), firstly, in that he presents not only the words of our Lord but His words and deeds, that is His life-story, arranged in one consecutive narrative; secondly it is based on the Knox Version; and thirdly the Gospel narrative is printed in Roman type on the left-

hand page faced by the explanation in italics on the opposite side. There is a map of Palestine besides a plan of Herod's temple, and six photographs. Some readers would like, with each section, a chapter and verse reference to the Gospel quoted. But the answer is that no system can please everyone. That followed here provides a lighter-looking page and is intended for less exigent readers.

One or two suggestions may be made in view of future editions. On the photograph opposite p. 188 Machaerus, where St John the Baptist was martyred, is placed in the middle of the Dead Sea. On p. 190 it is said that if our Lord left Nazareth on Sunday he would reach Jerusalem on Tuesday. The distance by the modern north-south road is just ninety miles and a thirty mile journey on three consecutive days is not undertaken without special reason. As the explanation of the refusal of the householder to satisfy the demand for bread importunately made in the night the author suggests, p. 224, that any movement would awake all the sleepers. This seems to overlook the realities of the situation. The sleepers must have been awakened already by the shouting involved in a conversation carried on from bed with a person in the open. The Crucifixion is dated, no doubt rightly, in A.D. 30. The Sunday following is dated 7th April in the chronological table. As other dates in the table show, the day intended is 9th April.

E. F. SUTCLIFFE, S.J.

The Biblical Doctrine of Election by H. H. Rowley. (London, Lutterworth Press) Pp. 184. 14s. net.

In this volume the Professor of Semitic Languages and Literature in the University of Manchester has published the Louisa Curtis Lectures which he delivered in Spurgeon's College during September 1948. The book is divided into six chapters. The first deals with the Election of Israel: 'God's choice is never to be understood save in relation to its purpose, and He chose Israel . . . because Israel could serve His purpose. And despite all her lapses and follies . . . she did greatly serve that purpose, and all the world is enriched by the riches of her inheritance'. The corollaries of Israel's election provide the matter of the second chapter. The covenant may be said to be the obverse of the election. God chose Israel to be His special people with the duty of carrying out the task He had in mind for her; on her side Israel undertook to carry out God's holy will made known to her in the decalogue and other laws. And as God is not only one but unique, beside whom there is no other, Israel was to be His special people entrusted with intimate knowledge of Himself, and His will for man carried with it the obligation to make Him known to the rest of mankind. The third chapter on 'The Limitation and Extension of Israel's Election' treats first of the Old

Testament doctrine of the Remnant. Of this the son of Isaias, named Shear-yashub 'A Remnant shall return (to God)', was a living symbol. This is the limitation, and the extension embraces gentile converts to the faith of the Hebrew people. These converts, whom we commonly speak of as proselytes, do not seem to have been sought with any missionary zeal in most periods of Israelite history.

In the fourth chapter the author turns to the election of individual persons, whom God raised up to be judges or kings, priests or prophets. But 'election is for service' and if the person chosen either refuses or neglects to carry out the task for which he has been chosen, God will reject him. This happened in the case of Saul. Of a very different character is the use made by God of pagan nations and rulers for the fulfilment of His purposes. Here God's instrument receives no revelation and is quite unconscious that Divine Providence is using his actions for a higher end not even conceived by the human author of the actions. Such men, though unwittingly, are doing God's will and acting in His service. Consequently we find God speaking of Nabuchodonosor as 'my servant' and of Cyrus even as 'my anointed'. The final chapter, which is the most important, has for its thesis that the Church of Christ is the true Israel, the heir of the promises, in whom have been fulfilled in higher form the blessings of Abraham, and to whom has passed the heritage of the ancient Israel.

The last few pages of the book, 170-74, are devoted to the election of individual persons in the New Testament. The reader may think that there is a lack of balance and proportion in the choice of matter and the allotment of space, and that consequently the contents do not quite correspond to the title of the book. However, quite early the author makes it plain that he intends to omit certain aspects of the subject, though the only one explicitly mentioned is that of predestination to heaven or hell. It is clear that, if the book was to be kept more or less within its actual limits of size, the author could not have enlarged his treatment considerably. It would, however, have helped his exposition to point out that election has a prehistory. God's choice is for a purpose and He chooses an instrument fitted for the proposed task. But who gave the talents that rendered the chosen instrument fit? As St Paul reminded the Corinthians, 'What have you that you have not received?' Whatever good qualities and power of action the instrument has, it received them all from God, and God gave them in view of the task He envisaged. If it is asked why God fitted this one and not that one for a particular task, at least we can answer with St Paul that the whole body cannot be eyes or hands, and neither can we all be apostles, prophets, or doctors in the Church of God. Finally, the reader will find gathered here between one pair of covers much that he would find only scattered elsewhere and will be grateful to the author, but it should be said that

the Catholic reader will find himself in disagreement with not a few expressions and opinions. Thus it does not serve clarity of thought to call a prophet an extension of God's personality. And as Yahweh who appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush told Moses 'I am the God of Abraham', readers will not find it possible to believe that God worshipped by the patriarch was not the same God known under another name, but a different God altogether.

The book is very accurately printed. But, p. 143, n. 5, it should be indicated where the quotation ends; p. 166 Loadicea.

EDMUND F. SUTCLIFFE, S.J.

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS RECEIVED

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the following:

- Dupont, *Essais sur la Christologie de St Jean*. Editions de l'Abbaye de St André, Bruges, Belgium.
- Ruckstuhl, *Die Literarische Einheit des Johannesevangelium*, Editions de St Paul, Fribourg, Switzerland.
- Jerusalem Bible, *Isaie, Lévitique, Jonas*. Editions du Cerf, Paris.
- Knowles, *The Episcopal Colleagues of Archbishop Thomas Becket*. Cambridge University Press.
- Knowles, *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*. T. Nelson & Sons.
- Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Washington.
- Verbum Domini*, Rome.
- Collationes Brugenses*, Belgium.
- Spanish Cultural Index*, Madrid.
- Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*.
- Societas*, Naples.
- Cultura Biblica*, Segovia.
- Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny*, Cracow.
- Pax, Prinknash.
- Theologisch-praktische Quartalschrift*, Linz, Austria.
- Unsearchable Riches*, Los Angeles.
- Estudios Biblicos*, Madrid.

